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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Patent No. 7,488,472 :
OKUYAMA et al. :
Issue Date: February 10, 2009 : DECISION ON REQUEST FOR
Application No. 10/748,148 : RECONSIDERATION OF
Filed: December 31, 2003 : PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT
Attorney Docket No. 247103USO :

This is in response to the PETITION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.705(d) AND REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT, filed April 6, 2009. Patentees request that the determination of patent term adjustment for the above-identified patent be corrected from seven hundred forty-two (742) days to one thousand eighty-four (1084) days.

The request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment is **DISMISSED** with respect to making any change in the patent term adjustment determination under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) of 742 days.

The above-identified application was filed on December 31, 2003. On March 19, 2008, a request for continued examination (RCE) was filed. On February 10, 2009, the above-identified application matured into U.S. Patent No. 7,488,472 with a revised patent term adjustment of 742 days. The Office determined that the 444 days of Office delay, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)¹ and 37

¹ Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 37 CFR 1.702(b) provides, in pertinent part, that:

Failure to issue a patent within three years of the actual filing date of the application. Subject to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(b) and this subpart, the term of an original patent shall be adjusted if the issuance of the patent was delayed due to the failure of the Office to issue a patent within three years after the date on which the application was filed under

CFR 1.702(b),² overlap with the 773 days of Office delay,³ pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1),⁴ accorded prior to the filing of the request for continued examination. As such, the Office allowed entry of only the period of adjustment of 773 days. No additional days of patent term adjustment were entered at issuance under the three-year pendency provision. Given the 31 days of applicant delay, the patent issued with a revised patent term adjustment of 742 days.

On April 6, 2009, patentees timely submitted this request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment within two months of the issue date of the patent. See 37 CFR 1.705(d). Patentees aver that the correct number of days of Patent Term Adjustment is 1084 days under the court's interpretation of the overlap provision as set forth in Wyeth v. Dudas, 580 F. Supp. 2d 138, 88 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1538 (D.D.C. 2008). Patentees assert that pursuant to Wyeth, a PTO delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) overlaps with a delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) only if the delays "occur on the same day." Patentees contend that the periods of delay attributable to grounds specified under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) overlap by 102

35 U.S.C. 111(a) or the national stage commenced under 35 U.S.C. 371(b) or (f) in an international application, but not including:

(i) any time consumed by continued examination of the application requested by the applicant under section 132(b).

² As of the filing of the RCE on March 19, 2008, the application was pending three years and 444 days.

³ A first Office action (Restriction Requirement) was not mailed April 12, 2007, 14 months and 773 days after the application was filed on December 31, 2003.

⁴ 37 CFR 1.702, provides grounds for adjustment of patent term due to examination delay under the Patent Term Guarantee Act of 1999 (original applications, other than designs, filed on or after May 29, 2000).

(a) Failure to take certain actions within specified time frames. Subject to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(b) and this subpart, the term of an original patent shall be adjusted if the issuance of the patent was delayed due to the failure of the Office to:

(1) Mail at least one of a notification under 35 U.S.C. 132 or a notice of allowance under 35 U.S.C. 151 not later than fourteen months after the date on which the application was filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) or fulfilled the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 371 in an international application[.]

days as they occur on the same calendar days in both periods. This overlapping period is the 102 days running from January 1, 2007 to April 12, 2007. Patentees maintain that the total non-overlapping PTO delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) is 1115 days as these periods do not occur on the same days. Given the 31 days of applicant delay, patentees assert entitlement to 1084 days of patent term adjustment.

The Office has considered patentees' interpretation of the period of overlap, but finds it inconsistent with the Office's interpretation of the overlap provision, 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) limits the adjustment of patent term, as follows:

to the extent that the periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in paragraph (1) overlap, the period of any adjustment granted under this subsection shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

As explained in *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f)*⁵ and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004), the Office interprets 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) as permitting either patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv), or patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), but not as permitting patent term adjustment under both 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv) and 154(b)(1)(B). Accordingly, the Office implements the overlap provision as follows:

If an application is entitled to an adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the period of delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay

⁵ Likewise, 37 CFR 1.703(f) provides that:

To the extent that periods of delay attributable to the grounds specified in § 1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted under this section shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

overlap under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). Thus, any days of delay for Office issuance of the patent more than 3 years after the filing date of the application, which overlap with the days of patent term adjustment accorded prior to the issuance of the patent will not result in any additional patent term adjustment. See 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), and 37 CFR § 1.703(f). See *Changes to Implement Patent Term Adjustment Under Twenty Year Term; Final Rule*, 65 Fed. Reg. 56366 (Sept. 18, 2000). See also *Revision of Patent Term Extension and Patent Term Adjustment Provisions; Final Rule*, 69 Fed. Reg. 21704 (April 22, 2004), 1282 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 100 (May 18, 2004). See also *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004).

Further, as stated in the *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, the Office has consistently taken the position that if an application is entitled to an adjustment under the three-year pendency provision of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending before the Office (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A).

This interpretation is consistent with the statute. Taken together the statute and rule provide that to the extent that periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1) and in corresponding § 1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

In this instance, the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) is the period during which the application was pending before the Office beginning on the date of filing of the application under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) on December 31, 2003, and ending on the date of filing of a request for continued examination on March 19, 2008 (not including any other periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)). The

relevant period ends with the filing of the RCE as the three-year time frame specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) does not include the period subsequent to the filing of the RCE. 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i).

Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) and 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1), 773 days of patent term adjustment were accorded during the pendency of the application for Office delay prior to the filing of the request for continued examination. There were no Office delays subsequent to the filing of the request for continued examination. Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) and 37 CFR 1.702(b), 444 days of patent term adjustment accrued for Office issuance of the patent more than three years after the filing date of the application.

All of the 444 days of patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.702(b) overlap with the 773 days of patent term adjustment under 37 CFR 1.702(a)(1). Entry of both the 444 days and the 773 days is not warranted. The Office accorded the greater period of 773 days for Office delay. Accordingly, at issuance, the Office properly entered no additional days of patent term adjustment.

In view thereof, the Office affirms that the revised determination of patent term adjustment at the time of the issuance of the patent is 742 days.

The Office acknowledges the previous submission of the \$200.00 fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.18(e). No additional fees are required.

Telephone inquiries specific to this matter should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3211.

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